U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
821 Market Street, Room 609
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Information Service
Western Area

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YOUR FAMILY'S FOOD
(Weekly Script No. 128)

(Time all scripts in advance. Suggest you make any changes desirable to fit script to local picture. News releases from this office, also PMA Summary are good sources of additional material.)

PARTICIPANTS: Announcer
PMA

BANGING OF GAVEL

ANNOUNCER: Your Family's Food! This is YOUR program, brought to you by the United States Department of Agriculture...YOUR program to keep you up to date on the many factors that influence YOUR food supply.

And here, once more, is _____ of the _____ office of the Production and Marketing Administration.

What's the subject for today, _____?

PMA: _____, have you ever stopped to wonder whether we're eating the same kind of food as our parents and our grand parents ate?

ANNCR: How do you mean, _____? Don't tell me that the kind of food we've been producing on our farms has changed. It's still meat, and vegetables, and milk and so on, isn't it?

PMA: Yes, of course, but the proportions of the various kinds of foods that go into our national kitchen has changed quite a bit.

ANNCR: More of some things, and less of others, is that it?

PMA: That's right.

ANNCR: That sounds rather interesting. Incidentally, how do you know?

PMA: Since 1909, the Department's Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics...and the Department's Bureau of Agricultural Economics, have been keeping records.

ANNCR: You mean they've been following us from meal to meal for 37 years?

PMA: Just about, _____, and they've just issued a report analyzing the food supplies that have gone into the Nation's kitchens during that 37 year period.

ANNCR: And how do we stack up with our grandparents as eaters?

PMA: War and food shortages notwithstanding, Americans ate better during the past war than at any other time in those last 37 years.

ANNCR: Our nutritional average has shown steady improvement, then.

PMA: Yes, and some of the changes that have taken place in our eating habits are most striking.

ANNCR: As I remember reading, our national diet used to be pretty strong on meat, potatoes, bread and gravy. We're eating less of those things now, I presume?

PMA: 30 percent less as far as grain products and potatoes go, over that 37 year period.

ANNCR: How about meat?

PMA: Meat consumption has varied through the years with supplies and incomes, but it dropped rather consistently from 1909 to the middle 1930's. Consumption was up in 1934 when the drought forced heavy slaughter, but it dropped again the following year.

ANNCR: If it varied, as you say, with supplies and income, then it should have gone up during the war, when income was high.

PMA: That's sound analysis. Meat consumption did rise during the war, until it approached the high levels of the years preceding the first world war. Probably it would have gone even higher, had it not been for limitation of supply.

ANNCR: All right, so we've been gradually moving away from the old standard meat, potatoes, gravy and bread diet. What have we substituted for it?

PMA: We seem to have been going in the direction the nutritionists tell us we should go.

ANNCR: More fruit, vegetables, milk and eggs?

PMA: Right. Consumption of citrus fruit, for example, has about quadrupled since "Alexander's Ragtime Band" was the latest hit tune.

ANNCR: So, for every orange, grapefruit, lemon and lime my grandfather ate, I eat 4.

PMA: On the average, you do. Last year, you ate a lot more eggs than he did, too. In 1909, the average was about 284 eggs per person, and in 1945, 374. For that matter, you ate 40 more eggs than the year before that.

ANNCR: In 1945, though, meat supplies were short, incomes high, and I seem to remember your talking about a near record production of eggs about then. So perhaps that really isn't a general trend.

PMA: Well then, here's one group that does show a very definite upward trend - the leafy, green and yellow vegetables.

ANNCR: That group is an important source of vitamin A, as I recall.

PMA: It is, and consumption of that food group rose about 20 percent between the end of World War I and 1941, and then climbed to a new high in 1945, when the consumption of cabbage, lettuce and carrots was very high.

ANNCR: Let's go back a minute. You mentioned a striking rise in our eating of citrus fruit.

PMA: Yes.....

ANNCR: Well, does that also apply to other fruits? What about apples? Do we still follow the old precept about an apple a day keeping the doctor away?

PMA: If our apple consumption is any indication, we don't believe that any more, because we don't eat so many now as we used to in the days when motoring was an adventure and wrist watches hadn't been invented. We only eat about half as many now. The story is different, though, on dried fruits....

ANNCR: We've become fonder of the prune and the raisin?

PMA: Yes, we have, about 50 percent fonder. And as you point out, much of that has come from a very large increase in our preference for prunes and raisins.

ANNCR: And that brings me to the item which is on the one hand a fruit and the other a vegetable.

PMA: I suppose you mean the tomato.

ANNCR: Exactly.

PMA: Well, without arguing that particular question of which it is, we are eating a lot more of them now than we used to - about 30 percent more today than when we had buttons on our shoes. And for some reason, there was a sharp increase in melon consumption right after the first World War, and a fluctuation around that rate ever since.

ANNCR: What about canned fruit?

PMA: If you'd been a steady customer in 1909, _____, you would have consumed about three pounds of canned fruit that year. By 1941, you were buying around 19 pounds a year. During World War II, you couldn't buy so much, because of large military demand.

ANNCR: Tell me this, does the boy who flies a jet plane at 500 miles an hour have a sweeter tooth than the one who flew a Wright pusher at 50?

PMA: That's sort of hard to say, _____. There was an upward trend in the consumption of sugar from 1909 to about 1930. Then the trend was down. Then it went up again, and then down again.

ANNCR: We don't seem to be able to make up our minds about sugar. Have we made them up about what we like to drink?

PMA: The trend has been pretty definite there. We're drinking more coffee and tea.....we'd drink more cocoa if we could get it. And we're drinking a whole lot more milk than we did 4 decades ago.

ANNCR: There's been a lot of emphasis on the high food value of milk, I know.

PMA: And that's been reflected in our food habits. Consumption of milk products...not counting butter...has gone up from 169 quarts per person a year in 1909 to 257 last year.

ANNCR: What about butter...and other fats and oils, by the way?

PMA: Pretty stable. The variations there appear to have been caused mostly by differences in supply.

ANNCR: Now, let me see if I have these interesting changes in our food habits, over the last 37 years clearly in mind. First, we have shown less preference for potatoes, apples and grain products. Then, our consumption has gone up on citrus fruits, dried fruit, canned fruits, dairy products, leafy green and yellow vegetables, and recently on eggs. Consumption of sugar, and meat, and fats and oils has varied from time to time, but shows no definite significant long time trends. And, oh yes, we are using more coffee, tea, and tend to use more cocoa. Is that about it?

PMA: That's a very good summary.

ANNCR: Now we know that this present generation of housewives tend to do their buying a little differently than their grandmothers did. But what do these changes mean in terms of our national nutrition? You said a while back that it was getting better. How are we achieving this progress? Did you mean we're getting more calories than we used to?

PMA: You might think that from the fact that we have increased our consumption of so many items, but the answer is no. The peak daily average in 1909 was around 3560 calories a day. Last year it was around 3350 calories, which, as you can see, was a little less.

ANNCR: But 3350 calories is still above what we need, which is about 2600.

PMA: It is - if everybody got that many, and if we didn't waste any of them. The report we've been quoting from is very careful to make clear that no allowance has been made for waste, or for differences in buying habits and income.

ANNCR: From that, it would seem as if many families may buy food providing more calories than they need and some of it is wasted.

PMA: I'm sure we could all do a lot better about not wasting food if we really tried. And it's important that we do try. The world is still short of food. We still have to share our bounty with others less fortunate than ourselves. And everyone can help to do that by purchasing no more than they need, and using what they do purchase economically.

ANNCR: I'm sure that nobody can argue with that. I still have a couple of questions left, though.

PMA: All right. Let's have them, _____.

ANNCR: Well, if our caloric intake, so to speak, has gone down since 1909, and we've eaten a lot more of some things, what's gone up?

PMA: Let's remember first that calories are only a measurement of total food energy, without reference to the other things we need from our food to keep healthy.

ANNCR: You mean things like vitamins, calcium, iron, and so on?

PMA: Exactly.

ANNCR: O.K. I take it we're getting more of those.

PMA: Except for protein, recently wartime consumption levels were higher for all nutrients studied than during any year since 1909. That means that Americans have been getting more calcium, more riboflavin, more iron, more B vitamins, and vitamins A and C in their food than at any time in the past 37 years.

ANNCR: Which should mean that our general health level as far as nutrition goes is also better.

PMA: It should be. But we've still some way to go. Once again, these measurements are only those of total foods available. They don't mean necessarily that everyone has bought, or has been able to buy, enough of the right kinds of food. Or that they prepared it wisely and didn't waste it. For one thing, we know studies carried on by the armed forces in connection with the draft, revealed that young Americans, in really shocking numbers, suffered from some nutritional deficiency or other.

ANNCR: But we are making progress.

PMA: I think you can safely say that. Through education, through enrichment programs, and approaches like the community school lunch and industrial feeding programs, more of us are better fed now than we used to be.

ANNCR: I'd draw one final conclusion from what you've been telling me. It seems to me that the record shows that our food supplies during recent years have been sufficient to provide everybody with enough food to meet nutritional needs, if distributed in accordance with need and if wisely used.

PMA: And this in turn underlines the necessity for American families to use their food wisely, to consume no more than they need, and to waste nothing.

ANNCR: Thank you very much, _____. Friends, that was your Production and Marketing Administration representative, _____. YOUR FAMILY'S FOOD will be presented again next week at this same time. This broadcast, a public service feature over station _____, is presented for farm and city listeners in _____. Your announcer has been _____.